

5/18/66

Dear Hal, and I hope, Steve, too,

I wish you had airmailed your letter of 5/9, for it would have arrived in time for longer response. I am about to leave on the trip, with the mid-night assurance of the main witness that there would be emergency surgery today, thus assuring me I'd be able to do a minimum amount of interviewing. I am now making my own emergency arrangement to use the time thus released for other purpose while I am there, for I can never afford any of these trip and this even less, for Ivon tells me they are entirely broke. I've having to put out 100% of the cost, and I cannot meet the pressing obligations now overdue. This, at least, gives you a measure of my than my poverty.

What you report on Youngblood is better than I had hoped you'd find. But that lazy John on it, Esca put out the little dough required. Get an extra glossy for Joel Palmer, who should already have been in touch with Steve. He also can make extra copies. He is a photog.

On Hall, Steve probably knows more than I. He should have a copy of the transcript of my and other Hall interviews (those following mine should have been much more fruitful). I have seen none, which is the new custom. This is also true of Howard. I get him to go to New Orleans, and what he said there is a total mystery to me. I expect much the same with Hall. The consequences can be great hurt, for I am in work that I can share with no one if the people are to survive, and it is in an entirely new but closely-related area. Hall phoned me from LA two weeks ago to see if I could be in MO with him. When I said I couldn't he said he'd try and fly here afterward. Having heard nothing, I presume he will not be able to. What he told me is consistent with your letter. I think the main two things are these: I have persuaded him that his survival and well-being require him to be with us, and that we alone can possibly add value to what he has and will not rob him of it. Knowing the New Orleans office, this may turn out to be less than accurate!

In haste, please accept my assurances that there is no triviality on Thornley that I should not have. He is entirely different that Dave takes him to be, Dave could not be more wrong, and the stuff he originally sent Garrison was very hurtful and quite misleading. - know. I have the proofs in hand already. There is so much I cannot put on the phone or in the mail. My mail is being intercepted, I know, and things that are vital have never arrived, including CIA proofs. My vagueness is deliberate. I encourage you to trust Dave with nothing. Either he is wrong because he is playing both sides or he is wrong because he is a human, with the problems of humans, or because he has special problems. But he is wrong, and very wrong. He recently tried to (and did) scare Fred Newcomb.

I despair of asking to be brought up to date on Hall and all the rest, but I'd certainly want to be. I think you will do better with Hatchcock than I. But I know you will send me what you can and as soon as you can, particularly the Miami stuff. If you have it in less than two weeks, or, say, by mailing time 5/18, send it registered c/o Jim. Be sure to register. I do not know how long my limited money will hold out. I plan to stay with a friend and to diet. But I have a new associate there who can help and has no connection with the office, which has refused to trust him for a year. Real Crazy. He's a grand guy and very much one of us. Just not an ass-kisser. He has knowledge in this aspect as no one else in the world, and it would be fine if he is there and we can go over that part together. My searches in the Archives have led to the assurance this stuff is not there. It was. I saw it in the Spring of 1966. I just do not have time to go over all of my notes, if I did note it, or to go over all those thousands of pages again.

Hatchcock did promise me what he had. All of my calls to him never

reached him. Not a single message. I finally got him at home the night before I left. I so wish it were possible for me to get out there and brief you people.

Hell, please try and put Silent John to work getting the tapes of that stuff you heard on the radio, etc. I can get them transcribed here. They can be enormously important. In many areas. If you do, let me know the copies you out there will want. If it is 1 7/8 or 3 3/4 or 5 inch reels, my wife can use a foot-contril, which will speed it up.

I have the so-called Utley report, if you people need it.

I had hoped Moss Martin might keep his promise to me, of developing a trusted New Orleans contact.

Liebeler's exact words on New Orleans are of enormous importance. I have now interviewed vital witnesses he did not call - no reports. I will not pin-point names, but they are in those you have. I have also established that he perhaps (but I think not) incompetently established a quite false record in part of what he could not avoid. Please send me the entire tape plus any notes. I'll certainly take time out for that, regardless of what I have to do on my return. He is now cast in an entirely different role, a meaningful one. Do not be deceived by that bumbling pseudo-sincerity. He cannot have been unaware of what he was doing. If there is any single man who had evidence of a conspiracy, it is he. I've got hours of it on tape, safely duplicated and out of my singular possession.... You did not give his answer, merely his regrets. He was recently and secretly in Baton Rouge, and what until you learn what is there! His was a short trip, there for but a few hours. The Archives has failed to respond to any of my recent inquiries along this line.

Superficially, Lane is right. This is the answer you'd expect from a man who has only limited, second-hand knowledge and refuses to do the most promising kind of work when he is on the spot. If the Shaw case gets into federal court it may be the end of Garrison, or that part. It will not be the end. Mark wants to enjoy his wealth, make all the dough he can (and rightly), and do as little as he can in return. His ignorance of the New Orleans story, for all his pilfering of the files, is astounding. Do not be of faint heart, but do be prepared for serious reverses. There can and may be rather forceful counter-moves from the other side. I have an advance copy of what might be one! I can here say no more.

If I can get a lawyer to file a civil suit against Carlos Bringuier, in New Orleans, I think we can do something, I'll file against the government as co-defendant! I've got new stuff in him, and the old was so grossly misrepresented. It is, again, the story of the purloined letter, and the fault is as much mine as anyone's, for not seeing it earlier. His suit is important in its timing and cast. It is a blackmail designed to keep me out of N.O.

I am being so carefully studied I'd rather than flag my interest. If Paul has a copy of CD301, p. 289, I'd appreciate it. It must have been missing when I went through that file.

On Thornley, again, please, everything. Calixta, anything. It is improbable that this name is duplicated in Mexico. It is rare. I have seen it and cannot recall where. It is not in any of the name files in the Archives. Whatever mention of it and any of the other names is essential. She also used the first name Theresa. She had five identities. I know her.

I hope the greater than usual haste and its adverse effect on the normally terrible typing makes no insurmountable puzzles for you, for I had no time for this letter. The machine is broken and I'm taking it in for repair while I'm gone (it is older than you!) I also hope I've omitted nothing.

Ask your Cuban experts if they have seen the name of a small group calling itself the Cuban Retaliation Movement For Better Government, which may be on the hazy recollection of a youth after five years. It is part of CMM, if my presumptions are correct. Try Bernardo on a name that phonetically is Con-seal-io or Don -Silly-o. Ask him also if he has any answers for me.

Things may be a little different when ~~xxxxxxx~~ I get to New Orleans this time. Jim knows and resents the fact that I have had to hold back on him in some areas until his moment of need. I have made it explicit: he is the least-trustworthy man in his office (and I know there are three leaks at least from my sources on the other side), and I have seen to it that he learned of my resentment at doing all this work free and having others make money from it, with his blessing and assistance. There is also some resentment, I think, at my going down there and picking up what is under their noses, in these very-brief trips. The crew they have working outside the office is mine, and they cannot manage even it well. I know, for I hear from my own people. I also hear that Jim is not happy about this. Probably true, but there is no alternative for me. He will not sign the death warrants of my witnesses, and he is blowing the good things he is into through ignorance, bad advice, perhaps other things, including a great trust in those who know little but the judicious use of the tongue. Four recent cases are glaring. He didn't even have the address on Dulles, didn't know Bohmer hasn't been archivist for a while, and this looks awful to the press. A phone call would have gotten him both, but ego and envy preclude it. However, I will continue to do what I can. I expect to spend almost no time in the office at all this trip. It is the way to waste most time. I have established my own file there, with Louis Ivon, and the stipulation that no one outside the office, particularly no writer, sees any of it. I am not sending things to Jim at all. Louis shows him what he should see. He hasn't time to see all of it, anyway.

The situation there is worse than I here indicate. There is no one competent to do any real investigating. Moex is lazy and can't even keep simple promises when they interfere with his petty pleasures, and he is the only one helping Jim. God know which of the investigators are untainted. They are not, in any event, skilled in this kind of work. Some like. If I tell you Gary is the best, do you know enough? Things that are sent there by people working with me cannot be found. Some that have been sent by some of us, personally, have never been delivered. I presume, at some later date, we may read of them in books. So, very little original work is done there at all. Morale is low, and how can it be otherwise, particularly when these powerful forces are aligned on the other side. Some work very hard and very well, like Louis Ivon and Jim Alcock, who carries the load of the legal work and does find time for a few other things. He spent part of Good Friday working with me, as did Louis. I'll probably know more when I am there. But last trip, some of the amateurs were despondent. I arranged for a woman to transcribe a dubbed tape of an interview. They failed to erase the tape, gave it to her backward, and she, with great labor, transcribed office secrets. My wife had to type the equivalent of a quarter of a book, in addition to her other work, to give them a transcript. All for nothing. On my return from this trip, once I've got all the notes typed, I'll return to the work I was on. I'll still be working on this, but not as concentratedly. If they blow and go down, we cannot go with them. And we will not. But I am not encouraged by the inability to work with anyone, incompetence, waste and general dismay I find there.

Hurriedly,